Oral History Cover Sheet

Name: Roger Boykin
Date of Interview: 2005
Location of Interview: Southeast Region
Interviewer: Brett Billings

Approximate years worked for Fish and Wildlife Service: 27 years

Offices and Field Stations Worked, Positions Held:
Bachelor's Degree in Forestry from Mississippi State University; Forester at White River National Wildlife Refuge in eastern Arkansas**;** Crab Orchard Refuge as a Division Forester; handled the Forestry and the Fire programs for Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, and Missouri; Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge in Slidell, LA; Atlanta Regional Office as the Regional Forester; Regional Fire Coordinator in Southeast Region to present day. Worked in Region 3 for 3 years prior to Region 4 where he has worked since.

Most Important Projects: Fire Program; Hurricanes Ivan, Katrina and Rita response and rescue operations; awarded one of the very first National Fire Plan Awards in the Southeast Region

Colleagues and Mentors: Howard Poitevint, Regional Fire Coordinator for Southeast Region and one of first Fire Coordinators for FWS in the country.

Most Important Issues: Hurricane management; Fire management

Brief Summary of Interview: Talks about how his background in forestry serves him well to work co-laterally in his Fire Management role; integration of fire management and forest ecology; offers insights to grad students interested in fire management; discussed importance of personnel management and decision making skills crucial in fire work; value and advantage of working for a small agency (FWS); speaks passionately about personal response by FWS workers in emergency rescues following devastation and destruction from hurricanes in the southeast region.

INTERVIEWER: If you would just go ahead by giving me your name and spell it, please.

RB: I'm Roger Boykin. It's R-O-G-E-R B-O-Y-K-I-N.

INTERVIEWER: And your birthplace and your birthdate.

RB: I was born on March 6, 1952 in Forest, Mississippi.

INTERVIEWER: What's your educational background?

RB: I have a Bachelor's Degree in Forestry from Mississippi State University.

INTERVIEWER: What years have you been employed with Fish and Wildlife?

RB: Started in 1978 and I've been employed ever since.

INTERVIEWER: How did you find out about Fish and Wildlife, how did you get into working with Fish and Wildlife?

RB: Well it was not by design. I was, right after I got out of college, I went to work for the state of Mississippi, had a great job with them except it didn't pay anything. So I decided I needed to work for the federal government if I was going to be able to feed my family. Actually went to work for the Forest Service for a short period of time, but I had to take a technician position to just get on the federal work force. And so as soon as I got on with them I started sending out applications of professional positions and I sent one to the Fish and Wildlife Service for a Forestry position on White River National Wildlife Refuge in Arkansas and was selected for that position. So I wish I could say it was by design or that I had always wanted to work for the Fish and Wildlife Service but the truth is it was the luck of the draw that got me started with them. I never regretted that; it's a great organization but I really didn't know anything about them prior to that.

INTERVIEWER: What jobs and what duty stations have you been to in the Service?

RB: Well, as I said, I started at White River National Wildlife Refuge in eastern Arkansas, and I was a Forester there. Left there and went to Crab Orchard Refuge as a Division Forester; I handled the Forestry and the Fire programs for Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, and Missouri. Stayed there about three years, moved down to Slidell, Louisiana, to work on what was then Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge, is now part of Southeast Louisiana Refuges. And I, as the Forester there, also managed the fire program but it was under a Forestry title. Left there and went to the Atlanta Regional Office as the Regional Forester. The Regional Forester at that time was within the fire shop, stayed the Regional Forester for about five years. The Regional Fire Coordinator retired and I applied for the job and was selected for it; that's where I am to this day.

INTERVIEWER: Particular reason you decided to go from the forestry end back over to the fire end?

RB: Well, it was a career move; I mean the truth is Foresters in the Fish and Wildlife Service typically top out about a GS-12. And Fire allowed for some

further career development and advance in grade. I'd been working, co-laterally, in Fire for a lot of years ever since I, really every single job I had, I had been working co-laterally. So I had a lot of fire experience, even with the State of Mississippi, I was a County Forester in southern Mississippi and a lot of fire experience there. When the job opened, I just applied for it. I still do a lot of the forestry work for the region, in fact, whenever there are forestry plans and prescriptions and such as that, I'm the primary person that reviews those for the region because of my past forestry experience. I don't spend, certainly, as much time in Forestry as I used to just because the fire program is so overwhelming and the volume of work to do. So I don't get to go out on reviews, I don't get to actually go out and do the things I used to as a Regional Forester, but still act kind of as an advisor on that. And presently the Region doesn't have a Regional Forester, they haven't refilled that position. When I refilled the position that I vacated, I filled it as an Assistant Fire Coordinator. And that just has to do like say with how the Fire Program has grown over the last twenty, twenty-five years.

INTERVIEWER: You know I've seen a lot of people that came to the Fire Program from like Park Service Fire Program, or came in with Fire Science background. How does your having a Forestry background; how does that influence the way you deal with fire?

RB: Well, a lot of the acres, the fire prone acres, and a lot of acres we burn and protect in the southeast region, in particular, are forested acres. And so having a Forestry background helps me integrate fire with forest ecology. And so it allows me to develop a program that is environmentally correct for our forested habitats because I have that forest ecology type background. So I think it's pretty important in our region. There's certainly some other regions that don't have as many forested acres as we do and it probably isn't as important to them to have a forestry background; it would be difficult in our Region to oversee the biological integration of those two programs without having that knowledge.

INTERVIEWER: Keeping that in mind, let's say somebody's going through school right now, they're on that undeclared, undecided major. And they're interested in fire but they're not sure about the best route to get there. What's your advice as far as the types of classes somebody ought to take to prepare them for a career in Fire, Fire Management?

RB: Well, certainly, I mean you're right, there's not a lot of fire courses out there. There are a couple colleges that are beginning to look into fire curriculum and that's probably a good thing, but there's not a lot of it; so having a degree in biological science. So one of the places I see the Fish and Wildlife Service being so different from other agencies is the objectives of the Fish and Wildlife Service are biological in nature; we don't have a lot of the other objectives that other agencies have. The Forest Service has a multiple use objective where the Fish and Wildlife Service is very, it's wildlife, and wildlife is so habitat-dependent. So if you don't have some background and knowledge in habitat management, some biological sciences, it's difficult to manage a fire

program, I think, real effectively. We ask our FMO's out on the ground to manage a different kind of program than a lot of other agencies ask their FMO's to manage; they're biological-based programs in many cases. So the first thing is, I think, a biological background is really important. And then the other thing is, quite honestly, you know I live in Atlanta, Georgia and I tell people all the time, "You know I didn't go to forestry school thinking I was going to live in a town of four and a half million people." Which is what I do. So the truth is there's a lot to manage in a fire program that's not about fire and is not biology; it's about program management. So the truth is, I think that business courses, personnel management, those kinds of things that are not the reasons a lot of us got in this business originally, or important things, important skills to have in order to effectively manage a program. So certainly in the first few years that someone in fire, a lot of technical is the most important thing you have, but as you grow through a career, which most people want to do, the focus changes somewhat. And you have to be able to have those skills, get them somewhere either from coming to a place like NCTC or using other mechanisms to gain those skills or when you go to college you have a number of electives you can take. When I was going to college I had a Forestry professor tell me all the best electives you can take are business courses and the truth is I didn't listen to him but it was true; had I taken some of those I wouldn't have made the early mistakes that I made in my career. And so management is not just about biology, you got people working for you, you've got to do personnel management, you've got to do all of those things. Refuge Managers are getting to the point where they're not just managing just the biology of the area, they're managing public use, they're managing their personnel; all of those sorts of things that certainly have direct effects on the biology integrity of the refuge, but you manage it through other programs. And fire's exactly the same way. And if you move up in just the fire organizations and incident management teams and such as that; the Incident Manager on and Incident Management team doesn't really manage the fire, he manages the team, and then he has people working for him that manage the fire. So those skills are really important for someone to develop through their career, like I say, either through school or after the fact.

INTERVIEWER: Part of what you were saying also made it sound like it depends what region a person is from, maybe whether they study forestry versus grassland ecology and things like that. Are there other regional bias, things like that?

RB: Well, I think, I'm not sure; I could manage the day-to-day budget stuff, personnel stuff like that in any region. But if I were say, in Region 3, that is a lot of grasslands, or Region 6, the mountain prairie region, I just don't have the educational background or the work background where I understand those ecological systems out there. And so it would just take me longer to come up to speed to know what the real issues are, to know what some of the effects of different practices would be. As a graduate Forester and a practicing Forester for many years I understand, or to some degree understand, what some of those ecological effects of different practices are going to be. So yeah,

having experience within certain habitat type is a valuable tool, and certainly each region is very different. I know nothing about the desert southwest. I couldn't go down there; in fact, I wouldn't know a salt cedar from a ponderosa pine if they were standing side by side hardly. So I just don't know what the ecology of those plants are, and I would just have this learning period that I brought experience with me to the job in Region 4 that helps me.

INTERVIEWER: To wrap that subject up that we were on, any further advice to students or people looking to be graduate students in a fire program, or looking to cross train into fire?

RB: Well, fire is a wonderful career, it really is a good career; has a lot of opportunities for people but it takes certain mentalities. I think people have to do some self-evaluation to determine if fire is the right kind of career for them; it can be a very, very high pressure environment. You're making decisions on a fairly regular basis that people's lives depend on; you're just doing a lot of those sorts of things that some people are just better suited for than some other people are. All of our jobs in the Fish and Wildlife Service are important. I don't mean to make light of any of them, but truly you can have a different personality type and be a biologists, or be something else than you can be in being a fire manger. You've got to be a decision maker, if you're the person out there directing people on fighting a wildfire, you've got to be a decision maker. You've got to be able to make good decisions, you've got to make them in a reasonable period of time, you've got to be able to stand behind those and have that personality that just works, and not everybody has that. And it doesn't mean that they're better or poorer person for it, it's just people are different and fire is one of those careers; it's no different than everybody's not suited to be a policeman. There are certain jobs in life that require that decision making, and it's not always just decision making ability, it's a willingness to make decisions and do the things you have to do at the moment. So I think some self-evaluation, is this the right career for me, am I willing to do the things? Because I, quite honestly, I've seen some people in fire that for them personally they would have done better somewhere else, and it doesn't mean they're not a good person, in any shape or form. It's just it wasn't the right environment for them. As far as other educational, because there is so little fire education out there, I'm not sure that any one particular route is the right route to take. Like say some biological background and just some management type stuff, I think is probably what's going to best outfit a person. Certainly if they have a region of the country that they most want to live their life in, going to a school that offers some courses, some biology that covers those habitat types, is an important thing to do, I think.

INTERVIEWER: That's good, very good information and I think that young people, they're starting their career, find that kind of information very handy. A little while ago you said working for the Service is great, what makes you say that?

RB: Well, the Fish and Wildlife Service is a relatively small agency and you know a lot of people in it, but it allows people to kind of connect on a more

personal nature, I think, than a lot of big agencies do. The other reason is, and I'll relate this back to Forestry, when I was a Forester in the Fish and Wildlife Service I would often be the only Forester on the station; very few stations have more than one. So when I was managing a Forestry Program I did everything, you know, I went out and I wrote the forestry management plan, I went out and did all the timber crews and then I worked up all the data, I did the prescription, I went out and marked the timber afterwards, and then I made the sell and I administered the contract. And if there was reforestation to do afterwards, I did that, so I did the entire process. A lot of other agencies that are bigger agencies, the Forest Service is a good example, on a national forest on a district level they may have a dozen different people doing those things and each one of them may be very compartmentalized. So you've got one person who's only writing prescriptions, you've got a timber marking crew and that's all they do is go mark timber based on a prescription that someone else wrote. And then you've got a timber sell contract administrator, and once the sell is made he administers it and then you've got a reforestation forester that handles. So it's rewarding to start a project from conception and take it all the way through yourself, that's a rewarding process that a lot of other agencies don't have simply because they're bigger than us; so being a small agency is part of it. There's also, I think, a real family atmosphere in the Fish and Wildlife Service that some other agencies, once again in large part because of their size, has lost. I tell people all the time that all the FMO's that I have in my region used to work for the Forest Service and now they work for us. I've hired all my people from the Forest Service but none of them have ever gone back, and that's true. So that's a pretty strong statement when you say things like that. The agency cares about its people, it's a rewarding place to work, most of the people in the agency believe in the work we do; they think it is important work and it's wildlife-based. So many of them went and got their education because they were interested in conservation, and so they get to come to the Fish and Wildlife Service; it's a conservation agency and work in that and work purely for conservation rather than having to mix in a lot of the other things. So it becomes a rewarding agency to work for because of that.

INTERVIEWER: Good information; want to get on to some of the business side of stuff. Can you recall which Presidents, Secretary of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Directors that you've served under either as a Forester or in Fire?

RB: Well, I'm so bad at remembering names that I probably can't remember a lot of them.

INTERVIEWER: Let me put it to you this way, do you remember any particular Directors or of those folks that you met and you served under where you felt that their leadership made a difference in how your job was carried out?

RB: I can't talk about, really, those higher levels of government because typically I've not been exposed to those people; I've certainly been exposed to some of their policies. But as far as any kind of a one-on-one interaction with those people above a Regional Director

position, if you will, I have not been exposed to them. And I'm not sure, there certainly have been policy changes through a career; you can't have a 30 year career and not deal with some policy changes. But as far as it being really sticking in my mind that this one Director or this one Secretary really changed things from black to white or night to day, that's not what I've seen. What I've seen is this progression or this change in policy that's been more of a stair step type progression from where we used to be to where we are now. And certainly the National Fire Plan in 2000 was a huge change in fire thinking, if you will, around the country. It started talking about instead of managing fires themselves we were managing communities and fire's effects on communities, and that's a different way of thinking than we used to think. And so that, I can't even remember the Secretary that was in at 2000 right off the top of my head, but that was a pretty big change in fire management for the Service, if you will, is beginning to look at things a little differently. But I don't think that I attribute to any one person much as I would attribute it to more of a different thinking within the general populace, and that different thinking being reflected through policy makers, if you will.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, you were talking about the National Fire Plan was definitely something that changed your work in extent. Can you think of any other significant events, things that also prodded or moved things one way or another?

RB: The thing I know best is my region, the Southeast Region. I've worked there my whole career with the exception of the three years I was in Region 3. But there have been some things, I mean, the fatalities at Okefenokee in the early '80's was one of the very significant events, not only in our region but the entire Fish and Wildlife Service Fire Program where prior to that there was a, as many things, it takes tragedy often to change the way people think and the way they act. And so there wasn't a lot of guidance on fire and fire management prior to that event. There was also a death within a couple years of that at Merritt Island Refuge. And those deaths caused some people to kind of sit up and take notice and say, "We've got to do a better job of fire management. We've got to get more professional in fire management." Then in the late '80's is really the first time that the Fish and Wildlife Service ever got dedicated fire funding. Prior to that all fire management in the Fish and Wildlife Service was a co-lateral function, and so there was a different thought process because of the way the funding was. Once we got dedicated fire funding then we started hiring dedicated fire people, meaning full time fire people. And that started the change that brought in professionalism because people were working in fire all the time. They began in working in the interagency fire community that really, before the late '80's, we didn't work in the interagency fire community an awful lot. Now the Fish and Wildlife Service has a very, very long history of fire management. They actually started prescribed burning in the 1940's, first federal land management to conduct prescribed burn was the Fish and Wildlife Service. But we were doing all of that kind of within ourselves, we weren't operating in the bigger realm of the interagency community. We didn't send people on

fire assignment prior to the '80's, late '80's. When Yellowstone happened, and that had so much media attention, we sent people to assist with fighting the Yellowstone fire so that was pretty significant in bringing us into the interagency fire fighting community, if you will. The 2000 Fire Plan and just the increase in budgets allowed us to begin to do more things, more training, hire people, dedicate more people into the Fire Program. So those are the kinds of events that have helped the Fish and Wildlife Service's Fire Program really progress to where it is today. Today I would say that our FMO's, Fire Management Officers, and our fire professionals are the equal of fire professionals anywhere in the country for any agency. But fifteen years ago that probably wasn't the case; we didn't have the expertise that we have now and we've built in our agency. So we've progressed real fast in the last few years.

INTERVIEWER: It's probably that progression. How has technology influenced the field?

RB: Well, when I started prescribed burning for the State of Mississippi back in the middle '70's and even into my first couple positions with the Fish and Wildlife Service, if I got ready to prescribed burn I sort of walked out into the field and licked my finger and stuck it up in the air and saw which way the wind was blowing and reached down and picked up some grass or some pine straw and rubbed it between my hands and said, "Yeah, this feels dry enough to burn, let's go set a fire somewhere." There was no prescription; there was nothing like that. Nowadays, the technology of fire is such that we have fire behavior analysts, we've hired meteorologists; it's moved more into the modern era. We can predict what fire's going to do, we can predict if you go out and drop a match on the ground will it burn or will it not burn. And the truth is while some of us that have been around long enough had a pretty good idea of what was going to happen, it was just a guess at that time and sometimes we guessed wrong. So technology has really made our decision making process much more precise as to what fire will do and won't do for us.

INTERVIEWER: Good answer. These are just some kind of bizarre questions, if you can't think anything on them, don't worry, we'll pass.

RB: That's fine.

INTERVIEWER: But just think about it for a second, see if anything jumps out at you.

RB: All right.

INTERVIEWER: What was the highpoint of your fire career so far?

RB: Well, actually, I think that the high point of my fire career probably didn't even involve fire. Quite honestly the last couple of years in the Hurricane Management that I've been involved in in the Southeast Region is probably the thing that I look back on, or will look back on and say was probably the most rewarding thing I did in my career. The Fish and Wildlife Service did the right thing, we went and we helped people. And we weren't concerned about the funding, we weren't concerned about a lot of things; it was people need help, let's go do the right thing, let's go assist them, let's help them. And that was a

real rewarding thing. As far as actually fire related highpoints in my career, certainly becoming the Regional Fire Coordinator for the Southeastern Region of the Fish and Wildlife Service is something that I'll always look back on. The Southeast Region has the largest fire program in the Fish and Wildlife Service and managing that program is a pretty important thing to me. I won one of the very first National Fire Plan Awards that were given out. There were only six National Fire Plan Awards the first year and I won one of those, and that was a pretty important thing to me. And I display that award in my office. I've got other things that are in a desk drawer but that one sits out. That was a kind of a highpoint that I will always look back on and think that, you know, there were a lot of people that helped me win that award, there were a lot of people out there doing work, but to have been a part of that is an important thing to me.

INTERVIEWER: You were hitting on something that we definitely want to address. People may see this interview four, five, ten years from now; they don't know what's been happening here the past few months, weather-wise, in the Gulf area. If you could tell us a little bit about what's gone on down in the Gulf region and how it has affected refuges, employees, their families.

RB: Well, actually starting last year, we had four major hurricanes hit the state of Florida last year. And Florida got so much notoriety in that, some people don't realize that those hurricanes, a couple of them crossed over Florida went and hit other parts of the Gulf Coast. Hurricane Ivan crossed Florida, came up, hit Alabama and Florida panhandle area, and came up through the central part of the Southeast Region. In fact, I had two trees in Atlanta that blew down on my house last year. And so those, we had those four major storms, a couple smaller storms, and then this year of course we had Hurricane Katrina and then Hurricane Rita that hit all the way from the Florida panhandle over to Texas. In fact, I tell people that in the last two years every single mile of coast in the Southeast Region has been affected by a hurricane; that's really the magnitude of these storms. And so at greater or lesser levels, every refuge along the coastline of the Southeast Region has been affected by a storm, now certainly some more than others. You take Big Branch Marsh, Mississippi Sandhill Crane, Delta Refuge, Breton Refuge, Sabine Refuge this year took major hits. Delta Refuge just decimated. Big Branch Marsh, decimated basically. But that's not where the only effect was; Noxubee in north central Mississippi probably close to 200 miles inland has an estimated fifteen or twenty percent of all of their timber blown down on the ground. So these storms don't just affect coastlines; the entire state of Mississippi was basically out of electricity for an extended period of time. So our people all over the region have been affected greatly by these storms. And then you put together a hurricane response effort, we had over 600 people assist us in responding to Katrina and Rita. And so those are all people who come from refuges all over the place, so they're not doing important work on their home stations when they're down doing that; they're doing the right thing. So this is an effect for the entire Fish and Wildlife Service; fortunately, some people are not personally affected as much, it's a work effect. And unfortunately, in the last couple of years, there's probably forty

employees whose homes have been virtually destroyed; anything from major wind damage, major flooding, those sorts of things, so this is a huge event in the history of the Fish and Wildlife Service. There are predications out there that it's just because of global warming, this is just the predications of some people that say we're going to have more and more hurricanes; they're going to be stronger and stronger. I don't know if that's true or not. I don't know if this is a natural cycle that you go through every so often, whether this is just the stars lined up incorrectly. Maybe it is global warming, maybe it isn't; I don't know but I know that over the last couple of years we've just had an inordinate number of storms and they've been particularly devastating to the Southeast Region. The other thing I say is if you look at a map of the Fish and Wildlife Service in the Southeast Region, most of our refuges are located along coastlines. We typically, we don't have that many interior refuges with exception of Mississippi Valley. Most of the rest of them are located right along coastlines. So when those storms hit they affect a lot of refuges. A number of other agencies' lands are not so located along coastlines as ours are. While the Forest Service, if you will, the De Soto National Forest in south Mississippi has a tremendous amount of timber down; a lot of damage, a lot of habitat damage. Their employees are not as directly affected, you don't have the complete loss of homes; families being just financially and emotionally almost destroyed with these kinds of events that we've gone through in the Fish and Wildlife Service. So it's certainly an event that will be marked in the Fish and Wildlife Service history I think for a very long time.

INTERVIEWER: The hurricane relief that's been done, how does being involved in the fire program prepare people for that type of situation?

RB: Well, the Incident Command System is what we work under. It is a management system that the fire program utilizes. And we've been utilizing the Incident Command System since, I guess, the early '90's. We used to manage fires under an organization called the Large Fire Organization and I don't remember the exact date, late '80's, early 90's, we switched over to a different system; it was called Incident Management System. And the premise of the Incident Management System is that there are specific jobs, there's specific nomenclature for different jobs and it doesn't matter who you work for if you're qualified to do a certain job, you're qualified to do it for anyone that uses that. For instance, a lot of times people used to call me a Forest Ranger working for the Fish and Wildlife Service; well, Fish and Wildlife doesn't have a position of Forest Ranger; there's no such thing in the Fish and Wildlife Service. Different agencies have different names for what their jobs are. Well, the Incident Command System helps to standardize those things. So if you're a Division Supervisor qualified for the Forest Service, it means the exact same thing in the Fish and Wildlife Service under the ICS system. So it allows agencies to come together during times of disaster, if you will, that could be fire management, a lot of other disasters and it allows them to work together in one system that they all know and understand and there's not confusion between them whenever they're working together. And so it really is a system

that allows, facilitates that working together very well. That being said, the Incident Management System is just what it is, it is a system to manage incidents. A lot of people think of it as a fire management system, but it's not. We've had Incident Management teams from around the country manage all kinds of disasters. The Oklahoma City bombing, we had an Incident Management Team that managed that. The floods in the Midwest back in the mid-90's, we had Incident Management Teams that managed that relief effort. All of the teams that are down managing Katrina and Rita relief efforts are all Incident Management Teams. And so it's kind of like if everybody worked for one agency, then they would understand because they'd all sort of use the same language, they'd use the same acronyms. If you've ever been in a meeting of people that you don't know and you don't work with them and they start using all their acronyms, you haven't a clue what they're talking about. So this is just a system that allows people to do that. The other thing that working fire arena does for people that helps them with hurricane response and such as that is, if you have a fire going, you've got to do something right now. You can't sit around and plan, you can't sit around and talk about it, you can't say, "Well, let's table that until next week." You just can't do all of those things. You know you've got to be action oriented, let's go and do something. And that's sort of the way the hurricane relief was, you had people down there that needed rescuing, that needed relief supplies; you need all of those sorts of things. And you couldn't just sit around and plan that stuff for days and days and days, that is too late then. I don't beat up on FEMA a lot; you know FEMA in the media has really been beat up on a lot over this. But the truth is that's really where they kind of failed in this thing; it's not that they wanted to do good things, it's just they allowed all of the planning and things like to get in the way of immediate action. They just weren't equipped for it and the fire program teaches people to take that immediate action, move forward and do those things. We've put systems in place that allow us to do that. Doesn't mean we're any smarter than anybody else, we've just learned it from managing fires for many, many years. Our teams are able to go in and take a chaotic situation and bring calm to it, bring order to it because they work in that environment all the time.

INTERVIEWER: All right, kind of closing out on things. Any other folks that you can think of that we should make a point to try and interview in relation to the Fire Program?

RB: Well, we talked a little earlier and you told me some of the people that you had interviewed, but Howard Poitevint, P-O-I-T-E-V-I-N-T, was one of the past Regional Fire Coordinators in the Southeast Region. And was actually one of the very first Fire Coordinators for the Fish and Wildlife Service anywhere in the country. So Howard has knowledge and experience of things that the Fire Program was doing prior to my knowledge at a different level. I was a field level back at that time and with him being a Regional Fire Coordinator, he would have some knowledge and experiences that would be quite different than mine.

INTERVIEWER: All right. Any other stories, humorous things you want to share about your past fire experience?

RB: I'm sure if I took a while to think about it I could probably think of something, but just right now nothing just absolutely comes to mind.

INTERVIEWER: All right, that's good.